



## **Feinstein, Lott, Snowe Urge Defense Authorization Conferees To Delay BRAC For Two Years**

*Senators Send Letter to Senate Armed Services Chairman Warner, Ranking Member Levin to Consider  
Implication of Recent Force Restructuring Plan by Administration on Military*

October 6, 2004

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Trent Lott (R-MS) and Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME) today petitioned Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Warner (R-VA) and Ranking Member Carl Levin (D-MI), who are currently negotiating the House-Senate Conference on the 2005 Defense Authorization bill, to back a provision passed in the House to delay the Base Realignment and Closing (BRAC) round by two years in order to have the necessary time to adequately define and plan domestic basing requirements.

In June, Lott, Snowe and Feinstein cosponsored an amendment to the Senate Defense Authorization bill that would have delayed the 2005 Base Realignment and Closing Process (BRAC) for two years. The amendment was narrowly defeated by a vote of 47 to 49.

“Closing bases in a time of war, especially domestic training bases, is a very bad idea,” Senator Lott said. “We’re in the midst of a War on Terror, and I can’t think of a more inappropriate time for BRAC to target our domestic bases and the committed American communities that support them. Congress should resume its abdicated responsibility of making tough closure decisions, and obsolete, overseas Cold War-era bases should be the first targeted.”

“We must protect the ability of our military to actively combat a global war on terror and protect our homeland,” said Snowe. “The President’s force restructuring announcement this summer to close several of our overseas military facilities and house those troops and assets domestically dictates that a BRAC round would be ill-advised at this time. I urge the conferees to the 2005 Defense Authorization bill to delay BRAC until we fully understand what our global military posture will be as we continue to defend our nation during these uncertain times.”

“Our military is under enormous stress in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the war on terror, in addition to facing a major overseas basing realignment proposed by the President. We owe it to our men and women in uniform to make a thorough examination of our military and overseas basing needs in the post-9/11 era, before moving forward with another domestic BRAC round. That is why, in the interest of our national security, I encourage the conferees to keep the House provision to delay the domestic BRAC process by 2 years,” said Feinstein.

The text of the letter to Warner and Levin is below:

Dear Chairman Warner and Ranking Member Levin:

During the floor debate of the FY2005 Defense Authorization Bill, we offered an amendment, SA3158, that would have refocused the FY2005 Base Realignment and Closure from our domestic installations to our overseas military infrastructure. We offered that amendment because we believe strongly that until our global defense posture is defined to a point our foreign basing requirements are thoroughly understood, to begin closing our domestic bases is premature and ill-advised. Although our amendment was narrowly defeated, we believe that the foundations of our arguments were solid and even more relevant given recent events.

On August 16th, President Bush told the VFW National Convention that over the coming decade, the US would be deploying a more agile and more flexible force "which means that more of our troops will be stationed and deployed from here at home." He went on to say, "Although we'll still have a significant presence overseas, under the plan I'm announcing today, over the next 10 years, we will bring home about 60,000 to 70,000 uniformed personnel, and about 100,000 family members and civilian employees." He finished by saying American taxpayers would realize savings as we consolidate and close bases and facilities overseas no longer needed to face the threats of our time. Exactly our point.

On September 23rd, Secretary Rumsfeld testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the global posture decision process and BRAC are tightly linked and, indeed, depend on each other. According to the Secretary, the progress made to date on global posture enables DOD to provide specific input on overseas changes for BRAC 2005. However he also, on several occasions, referred to the plan as "theory" which causes us to question whether, given the opaque nature of DoD BRAC deliberations, such inputs will inform the BRAC 2005 process.

For example, when asked as to when he expected to implement the Global Posture Review Plan and when he expected the re-ordering of forces to be complete, the Secretary responded, "Well, I can give you a short, general answer, and it is that I don't know. What we have to do is, we have a theory as to where we'd prefer to be arranged, and with what countries, and in what ways. We have other choices. We have options. We'll go to those first choices first. And if we can get an arrangement that's satisfactory in terms of usability and cost, we'll do it. If we can't, we'll go to our second choice and work that out. And we'll call audibles as we go along. And it will play out probably over a period of six to eight years, is my best guess."

Clearly, time is needed to process and completely understand the long term implications of this report that has taken three years to produce before we move to close domestic bases in the next few months. For these reasons we strongly urge the conferees to the FY2005 Defense Authorization to recede to the House and delay the BRAC round by two years so that we have the time to adequately define and plan our domestic basing requirements.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)  
Trent Lott (R-MS)  
Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME)

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